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FORMER NBA STAR DENNIS RODMAN SERENADES NORTH KOREAN LEADER KIM JONG-UN ON HIS BIRTHDAY PAGE 4

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Mayor Sam Katz, left, and director of public works Brad Sacher speak to media about the city's snow-clearing efforts Wednesday. SHANE GIBSON/METRO

City insists it's 'hammering' at snow problem

Plowing through. Mayor Sam Katz says effort has been 'especially challenging' due to frigid cold, huge amount of snowfall

SHANE GIBSON
shane.gibson@metronews.ca

As Winnipeggers continue to grumble about the icy, rutted roads and impassable sidewalks left in the wake of consecutive snow dumps over the holidays, the city moved Wednesday to assure a snow-weary citizenry that the push to plow is its top priority.

"We're hammering everything we have at this problem right now," said public works chair Coun. Justin Swandel, who joined Mayor Sam Katz and public works director Brad Sacher to give an update on progress Wednesday afternoon. "We're doing all we can and we're trying to do more."

Plowing on residential streets wrapped up Wednesday morning and crews are now clearing sidewalks, attacking the ruts and ridges left on both residential and major routes, and hitting streets missed during the Residential Parking Ban.

The city hopes to have all sidewalks clear within the week, the missed streets plowed by Saturday morning and grader plow operations complete on regional and collector streets by Monday.

But if calls to 311 are any indication — the city says it has received 12,330 snow-related calls since Dec. 28 — the work has not happened fast enough for many.

Katz said the frigid cold snap and the large amount of snow has made the snow-clearing effort "especially challenging" and admitted the city could have handled the situation better.

"This was … an extremely long cold spell, and it's difficult to deal with that," he said. "I think if someone had a crystal ball and could have seen everything in the future, we might have a different decision.

"But the reality is none of us have that."

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NEWS 1

Why do prairie dogs do 'the wave'? Note: This is not a joke

Research. Rodents wave to make sure others paying attention, says U of M

SHANE GIBSON
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Science has finally answered a question that's been dogging prairie dog enthusiasts for decades: Why do the furry burrowing rodents do "the wave"?

For those of us not fully up to date with all things prairie dog, apparently the black-tailed variety of the rodents do something called a "jump-yip display" that looks remarkably similar to "the wave" commonly seen at sporting events.

And after decades of speculation amongst people interested in such things, biologists at the University of Manitoba have figured out why.

According to a paper published in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B, black-tailed prairie dogs do the ridiculously adorable display to make sure neighbouring prairie dogs are on their toes.

Essentially if their neighbour passes the wave along, the first prairie dog knows his friends are responsive and will be aware of potential predators.

"This fits beautifully with work on primates, including humans, which suggests that contagious displays, like yawning, provide a window into the minds of others, suggesting of course, that species probing the minds of others are aware that they are distinct from those individuals," explained professor James Hare from the U of M's biological sciences department in a release. "Prairie dogs foraged less when individuals were less responsive to their jump-yip display, suggesting they use jump-yips to actively probe the awareness of their neighbours."

The display was previously regarded as an "all clear" signal used among prairie dogs.

A prairie dog does "the wave" to make sure everyone's paying attention to potential threats, say researchers from the U of M. COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Online gambling: Maybe the house doesn't always win

The Manitoba government's venture into the world of online gambling is generating a lot less money than expected.

The province was aiming to net $1.5 million in its first year from Playnow.com, but made only $300,000 in the six-month period that ended Sept. 30.

Andrea Kowal, with Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries, says the website launched a year ago and has been competing with many gambling websites around the world.

Kowal also says the agency was hoping to offer lottery tickets and bingo on the website when it launched, but those projects have taken more time than expected.

The Manitoba government has predicted the website will ramp up to generate $17 million a year by 2018, but Kowal says revenue projections for this year and next will have to be adjusted.

Playnow.com generates about $30 million a year for the British Columbia government, while Ontario is planning to start offering online gambling later this year. THE CANADIAN PRESS

South St. Vital

Winnipeg's Louis Riel School Division shuffles up schools

Hundreds of students are facing a move following a school board decision to realign a handful of schools in South St. Vital to make room for a spike in French-immersion enrolment.

The Louis Riel School Division's board voted unanimously Tuesday to turn George McDowell School, currently an English-only kindergarten to Grade 8 school, into the division's first middle school for French-immersion students in Grades 6 to 8. The shuffle will also see Ecole Julie-Riel and Ecole St. Germain changed into kindergarten to Grade 5 schools.

The move will affect about 600 students, and some parents worry they'll have to pay for a charter bus to get their kids to their new schools, but officials from the division said they'd help ensure students get to their new classrooms. METRO/WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Road safety. U.K. survey shows many men have fallen asleep at the wheel

Driving tired carries similar risks to driving drunk, but, according to a new British survey, sleeping at the wheel is common, with men being by far the worst offenders.

In the survey of 1,000 drivers, British road safety charity Brake found that 45 per cent of men admitted "microsleeps" of up to 30 seconds while driving. The figure for women was 22 per cent. A further 14 per cent of male drivers have slept for longer periods behind the wheel, while just two per cent of women had done the same.

An estimated one-in-six fatal road crashes result from tiredness. These typically involve vehicles veering off the road or a driver failing to brake.

"Men are much more likely to take risks at the wheel, such as setting off on journeys without enough sleep, or trying to push through if they feel drowsy," Ellen Booth, senior campaigns officer at Brake, told Metro. "We see this trend across the board when it comes to road safety."

Booth believes "cultural and biological" factors explain why men take more risks. More than 90 per cent of those convicted for dangerous driving in Britain are male, while a recent U.S. study found that men caused 80 per cent of crashes. Researchers are concerned that tiredness is adding to the trend.

Brake is calling for more education to ensure that drivers sleep enough and take regular breaks, as well as an audit of roads to guarantee rest areas. In the U.S., the state of New Jersey has gone further by making it a criminal offence to drive tired.

Another possible solution may come from technology, with devices in development that aim to keep drivers awake. KIERON MONKS/METRO WORLD NEWS IN LONDON

According to a new British survey, sleeping at the wheel is common, and men are by far the worst offenders. ISTOCK

PM defends rail-safety record in wake of N.B. derailment

Derailed train cars burn in Plaster Rock, N.B., Wednesday. A CN freight train carrying crude oil and propane derailed Tuesday night in a sparsely populated region of northwestern New Brunswick, leading to the evacuation of 150 people. It's at least the third such serious incident on North American rails since last July's deadly derailment in Lac-Mégantic, Que., that claimed 47 lives. Prime Minister Stephen Harper, speaking to reporters in Inuvik, N.W.T., Wednesday, defended his government's record on rail safety, saying the government has "vastly" increased rail safety and rail inspections. TOM BATEMAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fatal bird flu case located in Alberta

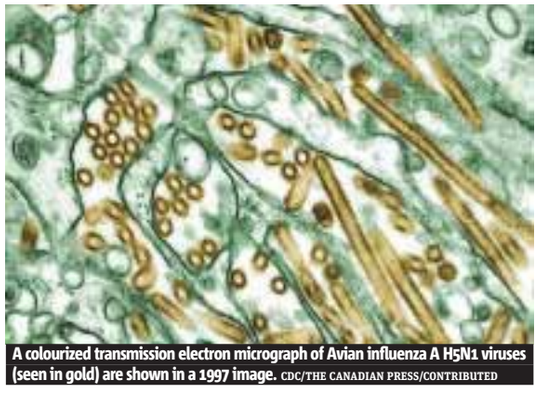
First in North America. Health officials assure public that incident was isolated, unrelated to seasonal flu and risk to public is small

Federal public health officials say a fatal human case of H5N1 bird flu has been reported in Canada, the first such case in North America.

Health Minister Rona Ambrose says the case, which was located in Alberta, was an isolated one and that the risk to the general public is small.

"The risk of getting H5N1 is very low," Ambrose told a hastily assembled news conference in Ottawa via conference call.

"This case is not part of the seasonal flu, which circulates in Canada every year."



A colourized transmission electron micrograph of Avian influenza A H5N1 viruses (seen in gold) are shown in a 1997 image. CDC/THE CANADIAN PRESS/CONTRIBUTED

The H5N1 strain is unrelated to the seasonal flu outbreak, Ambrose added.

Health officials say the victim had travelled to China last month and was hospitalized after returning to Alberta on Jan. 1, then died two days later.

They say that while it remains unclear how the person contracted the virus, there is no evidence of human-to-human transmission.

"The health system did everything it could for this individual, and our thoughts are with the family at this time," Ambrose said.

Dr. James Talbot, Alberta's chief medical officer of health, said that family members of the victim are being monitored and treated with medication, noting that there's nothing to indicate they are sick.

"Public health has followed up with all close contacts of this individual and offered Tamiflu as a precaution," Talbot said.

"None of them have symptoms and the risk of developing symptoms is extremely low. Precautions for health-care staff were also taken as part of this individual's hospital treatment."

The World Health Organization says that as of mid-December, there had been 648 laboratory-confirmed human cases of H5N1 flu since 2003, reported from 15 countries. Of that total, 384 infections have been fatal.

In 2013, there were 38 worldwide cases of H5N1, 24 of which were fatal.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Florida

Police: DNA shows 2 women involved in slaying of Canadian couple

Police in Florida believe two women were involved in the killings of a Canadian couple one year ago.

David Pichosky, 71, and Rochelle Wise, 66, of Toronto were found dead by asphyxiation on Jan. 10, 2013, in their winter home. The DNA profiles of two females were found at the scene, said police Chief Dwayne Flournoy.

"The science tells us that there are two females that are involved in this homicide, at least two," he said Wednesday. "It's only a matter of time before we get our match, and we will get our match."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Changes implemented

'Mistake' that let protesters get close to PM has been fixed: RCMP

The RCMP says it has identified and fixed the "mistake" that allowed two climate-change protesters to walk onto a stage within touching distance of Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

However, the force isn't saying just what the mistake was or what specifically was done to prevent it from happening again.

RCMP Cpl. Lucy Shorey says in a statement that the force continues to review the incident, and it has implemented changes to ensure it doesn't happen again. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Solar flare. Sun delays space station supply run

A strong solar storm is interfering with the latest supply run to the International Space Station.

On the bright side, the orbiting lab has won a four-year extension, pushing its projected end-of-lifetime to at least 2024, a full decade from now.

"This is a big plus for us," said NASA's human exploration chief, Bill Gerstenmaier.

On Wednesday, Orbital Sciences Corp. delayed its space station delivery mission for the third time.

The company's unmanned rocket, the Antares, was set to blast off from Wallops Island, Virginia, with a capsule full of supplies and science experiments, including ants for an educational project. But several hours before Wednesday afternoon's planned flight, company officials took the unusual step of postponing the launch for fear solar radiation could doom the rocket.

In this Tuesday image, a giant cloud of solar particles explodes off the sun, which is obscured to show the atmosphere around it.

ESA/NASA-SOHO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Orbital Sciences' chief technical officer, Antonio Elias, said solar particles might interfere with electronics equipment in the rocket and lead to a launch failure.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taking the plunge

Giffords skydives to commemorate third anniversary of shooting

Gabrielle Giffords, the former congresswoman severely injured three years ago in a mass shooting, has made an impressive recovery, learned to walk again and founded a national political organization. On Wednesday, while others gathered for bell-ringing and flag-raising ceremonies, she marked the anniversary by skydiving.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Insane Clown Posse

Rap-metal duo sues U.S. Justice Department

The Insane Clown Posse sued the U.S. Justice Department on Wednesday over a 2011 FBI report that describes the rap-metal duo's devoted fans, the Juggalos, as a dangerous gang, saying the designation has tarnished reputations and hurt business.

The American Civil Liberties Union filed the lawsuit in Detroit federal court on behalf of the group. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

North Korean leader serenaded by Rodman

Basketball diplomacy. Former NBA player hopes to build connections with North Korea through the sport

Dennis Rodman sings Happy Birthday to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, seated above in the stands, before an exhibition basketball game at an indoor stadium in Pyongyang, North Korea, on Wednesday.

KIM KWANG HYON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dennis Rodman sang Happy Birthday to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un before leading a squad of former NBA stars in a friendly game Wednesday as part of his "basketball diplomacy" that has been criticized in the United States as naive and laughable.

Rodman dedicated the game to his "best friend" Kim, who along with his wife and other senior officials and their wives, watched from a special seating area. The capacity crowd of about 14,000 at the Pyongyang Indoor Stadium clapped loudly as Rodman sang a verse from the birthday song.

Rodman said he was honoured to be able to play the game in the North Korean capital and called the event "historic." Some members of the U.S. Congress, the NBA and human rights groups, however, say he has become a public relations tool for North Korea's government.

The government's poor human rights record and its threats to use nuclear weapons against rival South Korea and the United States have kept it a pariah state. Kim shocked the world in December by having his uncle, once considered his mentor, executed after being accused of a litany of crimes including corruption, womanizing, drug abuse and attempting to seize power.

Rodman, 52, has refused to address those concerns while continuing to forge a relationship with Kim, whose age has never been officially disclosed. The government did not say how old he turned Wednesday but he is believed to be in his early 30s.

To keep it friendly, the Americans played against the North Koreans in the first half, but split up and merged teams for the second half.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Held prisoner

Rodman refuses to help

The sister of a U.S. man imprisoned in North Korea says his family can't believe what Dennis Rodman said about him while on a basketball trip to celebrate the birthday of leader Kim Jong-un. Terri Chung told KOMO Radio in Seattle on Wednesday the family was appalled that someone in a position to help 45-year-old Kenneth Bae refuses to do so. Chung says Rodman may be hurting efforts to free her brother. Chung says it's clear Rodman "has no idea what he's talking about." In a CNN interview Tuesday, Rodman implied Bae may deserve his punishment.

Hamilton. McMaster lab cracks genetic code of 1800s cholera bacteria

Canadian and American scientists have mapped the genetic blueprint of the cholera bacteria responsible for a 19th-century pandemic of the disease, cracking open a veritable medical time capsule to do so.

The researchers, led by the Ancient DNA Centre at McMaster University in Hamilton, mined a postage stamp-sized piece of tissue taken from the preserved intestine of a Philadelphia man who died of cholera in 1849.

The work confirmed the suspicion that the outbreak — the second of seven cholera pandemics in history — was caused by what is known as the classical strain of the bacterium Vibrio cholera. Currently most cholera disease is triggered by another strain — El Tor — that displaced classical as the most common cause of illness in the 1960s.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Two websites to stop billing people to remove mug shots

Two Internet sites that make money by posting millions of mug shots of people who've been arrested have agreed to stop charging them to take down their photos as part of a settlement in a federal lawsuit.

The lawsuit came about after a number of complaints from people who said the websites were charging hundreds of dollars to remove the mug shots even if the cases against those arrested had been dropped.

The settlement in U.S. District Court in Toledo, Ohio, doesn't apply to all of the mug shot sites that can be found online, just two — BustedMugshots.com and MugshotsOnline.com.

Similar lawsuits have been filed in Florida, Illinois, and Pennsylvania while legislators in Georgia and Utah have passed laws aimed at stopping the sites from charging to remove arrest photos. Lawmakers in California are considering a similar proposal.

But efforts to rein in the sites have been complicated by questions about whether the attempts infringe on First Amendment rights and the difficulty of tracking down who owns the sites, some of which claim to originate from outside the country.

Some operators say they're performing a public service by providing information about arrest records that can be found by parents and neighbours without searching through court records.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Blind man files complaint against cab company

Rights. Saskatoon's Comfort Cabs accused of poor accommodation for service dog

JACOB MORGAN
Metro in Saskatoon

Mike Simmonds with his guide dog, Graham. Simmonds has filed a human rights complaint against Comfort Cabs for not being forthcoming in their accommodation of his service animal in their vehicles.
JACOB MORGAN/METRO IN SASKATOON

After two unsuccessful mediation attempts, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission is investigating Mike Simmonds' complaint against Comfort Cabs in Saskatoon.

Simmonds charges that on three separate occasions this past fall, the taxi service was unaccommodating of his need to have a guide dog named Graham with him at all times.

"I've had apologies, (but) an apology doesn't correct the problem," said Simmonds. "What I've been asking for from the beginning is education and awareness."

This all began at the end of September, when Simmonds said he called a cab and was told he would have to wait for a pet-friendly vehicle.

He reported this incident the following morning and said he was assured "that all of their taxis are guide dog and service dog friendly."

However, in November he again called for a ride to the airport and said he was met with hostility from the driver, who suggested Simmonds ask for a larger car.

While the driver accepted the fare, Simmonds said he could sense the tension, which he said he learned was due to "religious reasons."

Just a few days later, Simmonds said he was made to wait with Graham in the freezing cold one last time before he took the matter to the Human Rights Commission.

Now, he said, a growing number of supporters have contacted him from across Canada and the United States.

"I've got a list that I'm going to be handing off to the investigator," he said.

Cliff Kowbel, operations manager with Comfort Cabs, said he could not find any evidence of mistreatment.

"Nobody refused him," said Kowbel.

At one point, Kowbel said that a gift certificate to any taxi service in the city was offered to Simmonds, but the olive branch was denied.

"I don't think we're going to offer him anything in the future," said Kowbel. "We're going to dig our heels in now and see what happens."

Kosovo. Severe winter drought leaves drinking water in short supply

A boat lies stranded on the shores of the Batllava artificial lake in northern Kosovo on Wednesday. VISAR KRYEZIU/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In 2013, winter brought heavy rains and flooding to Kosovo. The year before that, it was blizzards and snow drifts. Now it's a drought.

An official said Wednesday that some 400,000 people in and around Pristina, the capital, could face reduced supplies of drinking water, given a dramatic fall in the levels of the two artificial basins they get it from.

Arieta Mjeku, a spokeswoman for the regional water supply company, said strict reductions must be imposed if the winter drought continues. Mjeku said some areas are already on limited water supply.

Mid-January could bring much-needed snow, but the receding waters in the two lakes have exposed large sections of cracked, dry earth.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ontario

Senior found after snowstorm

A 70-year-old Leamington, Ont., man who disappeared during a snowstorm on Monday has been found alive.

John Friesen and his pickup truck were found Tuesday after he spent a night and much of the next day buried in a snowdrift in frigid temperatures.

Police say he was conscious but suffering from extreme cold.

CKLW/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pennsylvania

Pills on order from pizza shop

A pizza shop in Ligonier, Penn., has been delivering medicine and other supplies to ill and elderly residents so they don't have to go outside in the cold.

Tom Wynkoop, owner of Fox's Pizza Den, tells WPXI-TV he tweeted his offer because his community has a lot of elderly residents.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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metro

Experts. Our dropping currency leads to dropping more loonies at home

As the Canadian dollar falls to its lowest level in more than three years this week, many are wondering how much further it has to go.

With most currency experts forecasting that the dollar will continue to decline over the next several months, perhaps falling to as low as 90 cents US this year, many say a lower loonie will be a boon for Canadian business.

"Something like this will always be good for Canadian businesses whether they acknowledge it or not," said Ambarish Chandra, a business professor at the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto.

"When the loonie is weak, it makes foreign firms and prices appear more expensive and naturally domestic firms will always benefit."

A weaker Canadian dollar will ultimately lead to more consumers spending their money at home, rather than across the border. For instance, shopping trips to the U.S. as well as online purchases made from American companies will start to look less lucrative for Canadian shoppers if the loonie continues to drop.

Experts say there's an upside to our dropping dollar. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

THE CANADIAN PRESS

What are you, a mind reader? Well, yes

International Consumer Electronics Show attendees experiment with the Muse brain sensing headband Wednesday in Las Vegas. The headband measures brain activity, which the user can see on a mobile device to help manage stress and different emotional states of mind. JULIE JACOBSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Going somewhere warm? Soon you can see all sides of a hotel before booking

Google is expanding its hotel business, offering several new ways for travellers to learn about accommodations.

The most noticeable change will be the introduction of a series of high-resolution panoramic photos that are stitched together to create a 360-degree experience, similar to that found in the Street View feature in Google maps. These aren't independent photos but they are another resource for travellers.

Best Western is rolling out photos of its 2,200 North American properties and hopes to have all online by the end of the year.

Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group said it is also working with Google to get photos up of 100 of its Radisson and Country Inns & Suites hotels across the U.S. and Canada.

Similar to Street View

360

Google is introducing a series of high-resolution panoramic photos that are stitched together to create a 360-degree experience.

Carlson said photos will include the lobby, bars, restaurants and guest rooms. Where applicable, guests are able to tour conference and meeting areas as well as the swimming pool.

Carlson is also testing a feature in Google Maps that will let guests move through a floor plan of the hotel. So far, it has only been featured at the company's Radisson Blu Mall of America in Minnesota.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Facebook losing Canadian fans

Thumbs down.

We are not all liking the social media network these days, survey finds

Facebook may be the world's biggest social network, and particularly popular in Canada, but there are still plenty of Canadian holdouts who refuse to join or have logged off permanently, suggests recently released research.

One in three Canadian Internet users told pollsters that they did not use Facebook in the previous month, according to a report by the Media Technology Monitor, based on telephone surveys with more than 4,000 Canadians last spring.

Of them, 14 per cent said they used to have a Facebook account but quit, 16 per cent said they're technically still a member but rarely use the site, and 70 per cent said they never joined at all.

Younger non-Facebook users were more likely to have abandoned their profiles.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Not following

When poll respondents were asked why they quit Facebook, the most common response was they didn't find the site useful, followed by privacy concerns and a lack of time to engage with the site.

Canadians are not giving Facebook a thumbs up lately. GETTY IMAGES FILE

Data collection

French privacy watchdog fines Google $204,000

The French digital privacy watchdog is fining Google 150,000 euros ($204,000 US) for breaking rules on ensuring data privacy.

The CNIL agency said Google's new privacy policy — which applies to all of its services from email to calendars — isn't specific enough about how and why it collects data from users and doesn't define how long it keeps such data, among other problems.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seeks court approval

Mobilicity wants to include wireless licences in its sale

Financially struggling Mobilicity wants court approval to include its valuable wireless licences in any sale.

Mobilicity paid the federal government $243 million for its wireless spectrum in 2008 and the ban on its sale to major carriers expires next month. But Industry Canada has twice denied Telus' request to buy Mobilicity, which has been under creditor protection since last fall. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR
92.56¢
(-0.27¢)

Natural gas: $4.19 US (-$0.14)
Dow Jones: 16,462.74 (-68.20)

TSX
13,614.63 (+ 17.70)

OIL
$92.33 US (-$1.34)

GOLD
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OWN THE IRRATIONAL REACTION

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

It's almost time for the Olympics, which for many people is the only time they care about sports aside from hilarious ball-to-the-groin videos on YouTube.

That means some of you might have felt adrift this week as Canada announced its Olympic hockey team, an event that left hockey fans buzzing like my 20-year-old fridge.

Everyone likes to cheer for their country, but if you're not obsessed with hockey the rest of the time, then joining the heated conversations at home and the workplace can be tricky.

To help, I've compiled this primer for newbie Olympic hockey watchers about what they should say during the tournament to blend right in:

What to say during Olympic hockey:

The No. 1 rule to remember is that there can be no rational analysis of a world hockey tournament.

Canadian hockey history is rife with late, one-goal victories that somehow taught us that Canada is an unstoppable, dominant force in world hockey. It's also replete with shootout losses and other hard-fought defeats that taught us our national hockey program is a disaster that must be burned to the ground.

There is no middle ground, even if the outcome of the game came down to random chance.

Remember this when the games start. You might feel nervous about complicated discussions about matchups, statistics, etc., but those are just a smokescreen of facts that hide the three irrational pillars of hockey discussion: momentum, heart and clutch.

These might sound like intangible nonsense that would be impossible to measure or even ascertain, but shut up.

Wrong: "These are two evenly matched teams and there is no discernible momentum."

Right: Whichever team has most recently scored "has all the momentum."

Wrong: "It's overtime, so it's going to come down to random chance as two teams give it their all."

Right: "It's overtime, so it's going to come down to which team has the most heart."

Wrong: "I bet Sidney Crosby wins it because the highest scoring player is the player most likely to score now too."

Right: "I bet Sidney Crosby wins it because he's so clutch."

And that's how to speak like a true hockey fan.

One last lesson: If you come across a newspaper columnist or other unpatriotic liberal who questions any of these truisms, your surefire response is to say, "Clearly you've never played the game," and then walk away. With that sort of momentum, you could be a TV hockey commentator in no time.

Assuming, of course, that you're clutch.

ZOOM

Dark clouds hanging overhead

ULET IFANSASTI/GETTY IMAGES

Volcano erupts in Indonesia, again

Mount Sinabung spews pyroclastic smoke, seen from Sibintun village on Wednesday in Karo District, North Sumatra, Indonesia.

The number of displaced people has increased to 22,000 in Western Indonesia as Mount Sinabung continues to spew ash and smoke after several eruptions since September. Eleven deaths have now been recorded as a result of the eruptions, with hundreds more falling ill. Officials expect the number of evacuees to rise as volcanic activity remains high.

Sinabung had lain dormant for 400 years before a re-awakening eruption in 2010. Sinabung is one of nearly 130 active volcanoes in Indonesia that straddle key tectonic fault lines known as the Pacific Ring of Fire.

The deadliest eruption in recent years was of Mount Merapi in 2010 near the densely populated city of Yogyakarta, which killed 350 people.

GETTY IMAGES

A man wears a plastic bag to cover his head after his village was smothered by ash. GETTY IMAGES

Clickbait

HANNAH ZITNER
hannah.zitner@metronews.ca

Health, wellness and wearable tech are colliding in full force at this year's Consumer Electronic Show, with a healthy portion of products geared toward the digitally-inclined fitness diehards. Look out Fitbit and FuelBand, there are some new kids on the starting block.

CONTRIBUTED

Skulpt Aim:

Knowing how many clicks you've run and calories you've burned is just part of the health equation. Knowing the effects of your hard work is the other. Press this phone-size gadget to your freshly pumped muscles to get an instant (and accurate, they say) reading of your body composition.

Tinke:

Again, for those beyond measuring simple kms and cals, Tinke reads heart rate, blood oxygen levels and respiratory rate with just the tap of your thumb (accuracy may be questionable on this one).

Bracelets:

LG, Sony, Razer and even Intel have launched fitness tracking bracelets, all taking various metrics of your activities which connect to varying degrees with your smartphone.

Twitter

@metropicks asked: @jimmykimmel dumped snow on L.A. beach goers who bragged about the warm climate. What is a suitable penalty for bragging?

@yelpcalgary: Ha. Californians are just jealous of our awesome touques.

@ehbsea: One hour in a walk in freezer in their beach wear

@adam_rizk: A big enough star he could've had a following to Sequoia, Yosemite mountains & left them there LYAO!

@sarahmeaghang: They should have gotten "face-washes"

Follow @metropicks and take part in our daily poll.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU: Send us your comments: winnipegletters@metronews.ca

metro

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SCENE 2

Crack attack hits Winnipeg

Symphony Crack Orchestra. Band formed by Ashanti Floyd blends many different music types

BACKSTAGE PASS
Jared Story
winnipeg@metronews.ca

Led by Ashanti Floyd, centre, a.k.a. The Mad Violinist, Atlanta's Symphony Crack Orchestra plays three shows at the Pyramid Cabaret next week. CONTRIBUTED

If the devil goes down to Georgia looking for a soul to steal, he'd better not challenge Ashanti Floyd to a fiddling duel.

Known as The Mad Violinist, the Atlanta-based musician started playing the stringed instrument at age three, testing out of Berklee College of Music in two years.

After leaving Yelawolf in 2009, Floyd and guitarist Matt Barrett formed Symphony Crack Orchestra, a band that blends pop, rock, hip hop, R&B, gospel, bluegrass and jazz.

"A lot of violinists reach out to me and ask how I do what I do and I have to explain to people it's mostly a lifestyle," says Floyd, 30, the product of a pianist father and a violinist mother.

"I grew up in Tallahassee, Fla. I grew up in an urban neighbourhood, and I grew up on hip hop. I also grew up in the marching band, playing the drums. I also grew up in the church. Also, my mother being strict on classical music, all of that had an important role in my life, and I just never steered away from it. I spent so many years trying to make it all make sense, even when it didn't make sense to anyone else."

Floyd recalls being laughed at when he requested the violin in sixth grade band class, his teacher responding with "We don't play the violin here." However, Floyd would soon gain his peers respect, and then some.

"I remember in the 12th grade when I played in front of the whole school at an assembly with just a drummer, it got so crazy in there a girl took off her panties and threw them," Floyd says.

In addition to Symphony Crack Orchestra's two albums, 2011's The Addiction and 2012's Fiend, Floyd has provided instrumentation (he plays 30 instruments) and production for artists like Nicki Minaj, Lupe Fiasco and childhood friend T-Pain.

"I do it all, man. I arrange for orchestras too," Floyd says. "My mom, she really got at me at a young age with theory, and the things that were important to have a very versatile music career. I didn't notice it then. I thought it was a normal thing, how much I was learning, until I went to college and tested out in my first two years."

Quoted

"I spent so many years trying to make it all make sense, even when it didn't make sense to anyone else."

Ashanti Floyd, on putting together his disparate influences

Show details

Symphony Crack Orchestra plays three nights at the Pyramid Cabaret Jan. 16-18.

- **Openers.** Dust Rhinos, Cheering for the Bad Guy, Mad Young Darlings and Rockopolis PA
- **Tickets.** $10 at Into the Music and Hunter and Gunn. Shows start at 9 p.m.

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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Selena Gomez ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Gomez thought to be back in Bieber's arms after devastating diagnosis

Just why are Selena Gomez and Justin Bieber back to canoodling? Sources say it's because of Gomez's recent lupus diagnosis. "Justin reached out to Selena after she cancelled the tour," a Bieber insider tells Life & Style, referring to Gomez cancelling her 2014 Stars Dance tour last month, reportedly after she got the diagnosis of the autoimmune disease. "He wanted to make sure she was OK and healthy. He cares about her a lot. I don't know if they'll get back together, but he wanted to see her and spend time with her."

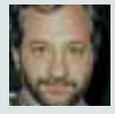
The Word

Paul's got some party haul but this one was a real thriller

Aaron Paul has been to some impressive parties, but one sticks out particularly for the Breaking Bad star. "It was the Prince of Brunei's 25th birthday party. Six years ago, outside of London," he tells Details magazine. Paul, who attended as another guest's plus-one, entertained himself by chasing sheep around the castle and breaking the Prince's hovercraft. He certainly made an impression: "I was going back up to my room, and this guy grabs me and says, 'Hey, Prince Azim wants to see you in the library,'" Paul says. "So I go down there, and he's sitting on the couch with Michael Jackson, and me and Michael Jackson end up having this hour-long heart-to-heart about family and upbringings, and I remember, he just put his arm around my shoulder and said, 'You know, if you've had a rough childhood or not, it's all about forgiveness. Once you realize that, it's fine. Everything's fine.' And I'm like, 'Michael, you are absolutely right. Do you want to do a shot?' And he goes 'Sure!'"

Twitter

@kirstiealley
When someone says "It isn't you, it's me"....It's you



@JuddApatow
How do I avoid this freaking stomach flu? I am not a big fan of multiple days of vomiting.

@MarkDuplass
Milquetoast. Great word. Underutilized.

Jake Gyllenhaal

Gyllenhaal's relationship with model 'fizzled out'

Jake Gyllenhaal has reportedly split up with model Alyssa Miller after six months of dating, according to Us Weekly. "They fizzled out. It happened a while back — before the holidays. He's back on the scene," a source says. "Things were really good between Jake and Alyssa right up until he had to leave for L.A. to shoot a movie in the fall. Then the distance just really got to them." Reps for Gyllenhaal and Miller did not respond to requests for comment.

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LIFE 3

Every sharp shopper has a calendar in the closet

Seasonal secrets. Style expert Lilliana Vazquez shares tips on mapping out your 2014 shopping plan

ANDREA PARK
Metro World News

There is a right time and a wrong time to buy those shoes you've been eyeing, and even if you made a New Year's resolution to save money in 2014, that doesn't mean you have to sacrifice style. Lilliana Vazquez, style expert and author of The Cheap Chica's Guide to Style, shares her tips on planning a shopping schedule for the year and how you can save money on hot wardrobe staples with just a bit of good timing.

January

Winter coats and accessories
This frosty month is the perfect time to buy warm winter goods. "Whether it's a brand new coat, hats, scarves, gloves, boots or ski stuff, items get really marked down in January but in a city like New York, we'll probably still be wearing these until April," says Vazquez.

Formal wear
"Anyone who was selling New Year's and holiday party stuff still has a lot of merchandise, so this is the best time of the year to buy a cocktail dress," says Vazquez. She added that it's an especially great time to save on anything sparkly or beaded.

February

Spring items
Believe it or not, February is a great month to buy spring items. Vazquez says though this is when stores get their first shipments of spring clothes, retailers will mark them down if no one is buying. "You can get new stuff marked down if it's really cold out," Vazquez says.

Winter clearance
If you still need winter clothes, this is when winter gear is on final mark down. The merchandise will already be picked over, but it will be at its cheapest.

March and April

Shoes
Get a head start on summer shoe shopping in March and April, when the selection is the largest. Stores will offer some early markdowns, and those sandals you've had your eye on may be gone by May.

Fitness gear
"A lot of (sneakers and fitness items) come in for the New Year's resolutions of people who say they're going to work out and then never do, so if you're a runner or gearing up for the summer, it's a great time to buy sneakers and fitness fashion items," says Vazquez. She added that this is when Lululemon fans can buy their favourite brand on deep discount.

May

Secondhand items
May is a big month for spring cleaning, which means that lots of people are getting rid of their clothes and accessories, and one man's trash is another man's treasure, right? "A lot of people are cleaning out, so it's a good time to deal hunt in your neighbourhood," says Vazquez. "You can get vintage stuff and great shoes because they're making room in their closets for all new things."

Lilliana Vazquez, author of The Cheap Chica's Guide to Style. GETTY IMAGES

June and July

Summer items
Fall items will be trickling into stores by now, which means you can find great deals on summer clothes and accessories. "You can get stuff you can get a lot of use out of, like shorts, rompers and sundresses — things that feel seasonal," says Vazquez.

Swimsuits
Stores will still carry plenty of swimsuits, but they'll be marked down by June and July. "You'll still wear them for another two or three months," pointed out Vazquez.

Leap on that LBD ASAP!

"Anyone who was selling New Year's and holiday party stuff still has a lot of merchandise, so this is the best time of the year to buy a cocktail dress."
Lilliana Vazquez

Thinking ahead

- **Summer's end** Vazquez called this "back-to-school summer leftover time." Inventory will be a mixed bag of summer odds and ends without much size availability, but this is when you can get the best deals on summer clearance items. Plus, you'll find discounts on new inventory during back-to-school and Labour Day promotions.
- **Baby, it's cold outside** November is a big shopping month with Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Vazquez says this is when she saves up for her big, pricey purchases like cashmere sweaters. "These deals I only splurge on once a year because I can wear them for a long time, so it's a great value proposition for my closet," she says.

December's diamonds
Vazquez says that December is the last chance for retailers to grab customers for their year-end earnings reports, which means holiday sales abound. This is an especially good time to get "no size" gifts like hats, bags, gloves and scarves for friends and family.

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Print yourself some new furnishings

Technology. A novelty once reserved for sci fi, 3-D printing has now gone mainstream

Looking for that perfect light for your home office? A new chair or coffee table? You might try making it yourself, at home, with just the click of a button.

3-D printing, a novelty once reserved for science fiction, is going mainstream thanks to cheaper, more accessible technology.

The printers, which now cost as little as $300, use lasers to blast out layer upon layer of plastics or other materials, forming 3-D objects.

And if you don't have the time, money or inclination to invest in a 3-D printer of your own, there are hundreds of websites selling lights, coasters, sculptures, furniture and even wallpaper crafted by 3-D printers.

New York-based Shapeways, for example, allows users to make, buy or sell three-dimensional designs. Products include a delicate, twig-like egg cup for $8 and a lamp that looks like a nuclear mushroom cloud for $1,389.

Lighting

Among the most popular — and dramatic — 3-D products for the home are lights, whether ceiling pendants, table lamps or floor lamps.

Belgium's .MGX by Materialise, a pioneer in 3-D printing, is known for museum-quality, futuristic designs. Among the most popular is the Bloom table lamp (about $2,600 US), a flower-bud inspired design with joints that you can expand or collapse to release or contain light, says marketing manager Katrien Vandenplas.

Shapeways offers dozens of lamps created by some of the site's more than 11,000 "shop owners," or designers. The honeycomb-inspired Veroni lampshade, for instance, costs as little as $15 US and comes in a variety of colours and materials ranging from the standard plastic to raw metal and steel.

Wall hangings

Statement pieces for your walls run the gamut in the 3-D printing world.

Shapeways' ethereal Whales ($48) lends modern sophistication with its airy rendition of two swimming whales crafted from white plastic. They almost seem to spring off the wall.

Florida-based Proton 3D Studio offers a little kitsch with a pop art-like plastic Pi symbol ($21) and the word "geek" crafted in orange plastic script lettering ($24).

Sweden's Kredema Design has one of the more off-the-wall home-decor products: 3-D wallpaper that rolls out away from the wall to form shelves, magazine holders and even lampshades. Made from sheets of acrylic and wallpaper, the Off the Wall collection is available by special order only.

Accessories

From picture frames to vases and even planters, you can design or find just about anything home-related using 3-D printing technology.

These photos show products from .MGX, the design division of Belgium-based 3-D printing company Materialise. Above, a Fractal.MGX coffee table by WertelOberfell, made from brown epoxy resin, was designed to echo the growth patterns of trees. MGX BY MATERIALISE

Shapeways recently added glazed ceramic to its list of materials, making it possible to craft personalized plates, mugs, salt and pepper shakers, and other items for the table.

Blogger and tech consultant Michael Sitver designed some personalized coasters in about 90 minutes using 3-D CAD software called Autodesk Inventor. He printed them up at Shapeways' website.

"This is a great project for beginners," says Sitver, of Weston, Conn., "because designing it doesn't take too much work, but it helps beginners get acquainted with the tools involved and the process."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Volume.MGX lamp by Dror expands from a flattened position to create a shape which, when lit, provides both a bright, warm glow in its centre and a cooler, darker feeling around its edges.

Online sources

- **Shapeways:** shapeways.com
- **.MGX by Materialise:** mgxbymaterialise.com
- **ProtoParadigm:** protoparadigm.com
- **Proton3D Studio:** etsy.com/ca/shop/proton3D
- **Kredema Off the Wall:** kredema.se/offthewall

Big, bold design trends for the new year

This year brings big changes on the home decor front. We'll say goodbye to espresso wood and cool grey colours while welcoming lighter woods, warmer walls and coloured, artful rugs. These trends will hold strong for a few years, so keep them in mind for future decorating projects. Here are four key ones worth investing in over the next year and beyond.

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Lighter wood tones

Goodbye dark espresso wood tones and hello lighter, natural oak. No, not the honey-golden oak from the '80s: think grainy, raw oak with a simple coat of wax. Pagan's Dance brushed, engineered wide plank flooring, $13.75 per square foot, kentwoodfloors.com.

Warmer paint colours

The new neutral is platinum. Think grey with a dollop of brown to warm it up. Looks great with almost every other colour. Escarpment CC-518, benjaminmoore.ca.

Bolder, artful rugs

Go bold or don't bring it home. Art and rugs are going big and bold. It's time to wake up our spaces, so think of colourful rugs as artwork for the floor. Kashmir 8x10 orange wool rug, $363, ecarpetgallery.com.

Golden metal finishes

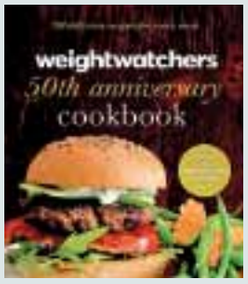
Metal tones are warming up, so go with polished gold for a luxe vibe or tarnished brass for a casual, industrial look. Graham Table Lamp, $338, crateandbarrel.ca.

A Southern classic without the pesky fat

This recipe serves six. One chop with 1/4 cup sauce contains 253 calories and 11 grams total fat.

Cookbook of the Week

Get excited about eating healthy



Weight Watchers cookbooks are trusted by anyone who is excited about cooking delicious, healthy food.

This latest offering serves up more than 280 favourites that have been updated, and feature fresh ingredients, how-to tips, Weight Watchers lore, and nutritional info and PointsPlus values for the newest program, Weight Watchers 360°.

Among the dishes included are Cajun Catfish, Cheese Puffs, Curried Vegetable Stew, Lamb Kebobs, Classic Red Velvet Cake, and more. METRO

"Pork chops in onion sauce is a Southern classic, but often it is swimming in too much fat," write the Weight Watchers folks in the book Weight Watchers 50th Anniversary Cookbook of this Skillet Pork Chops with Onion Gravy recipe. "We gave the dish a healthy makeover that retains all the great flavour but with a mere one teaspoon of oil. Think of it as comfort food that you can really feel comfortable with!"

1. Sprinkle the chops with the salt and pepper. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Swirl in the oil, add the chops and cook, turning occasionally, until browned, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a plate.

2. Add the onions, 1/4 cup of the broth, and the garlic to the skillet. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, until the onions are very tender, 12–15 minutes.

Good idea

Steamed kale or collards sprinkled with a touch of cider vinegar and red pepper flakes makes a fresh and flavourful side for this dish.

3. Sprinkle the onions with the flour; cook, stirring constantly, 1 minute. Add the remaining 1 cup broth, mustard, and thyme. Bring to a boil, stirring until the sauce bubbles and thickens. Return the chops and any accumulated juices to the skillet. Reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, until the chops are heated through, 2–3 minutes. FOR MORE WEIGHT WATCHERS RECIPES, PLEASE VISIT WEIGHTWATCHERS.CA/FOOD. RECIPES AND PHOTOS REPRINTED FROM WEIGHT WATCHERS 50TH ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK © 2013 WEIGHT WATCHERS INTERNATIONAL, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Ingredients

- 4 (6-oz) bone-in porkloin chops, trimmed
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp ground pepper
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 2 sweet onions, thinly sliced
- 1 1/4 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tsp all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp whole-grain Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme

This recipe serves four. One and 1/4 cups of soup with three tortilla chips contains 142 calories and three grams total fat.

Lunch. Southwestern Chicken-Vegetable Soup

1. Combine broth, vegetables, tomatoes, chili powder, and cumin in a saucepan. Bring to a boil; reduce the heat and simmer, covered, until the vegetables are tender, 10 minutes.

2. Stir in the chicken and cook until heated through, 2 minutes. Stir in the cilantro and lime juice. Top each serving with 3 of the tortilla chips.

Ingredients

- 3 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cups frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 (14 1/2-oz) can diced tomatoes
- 2 tsp chili powder
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 cup chopped skinless cooked chicken breast
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 12 baked tortilla chips, crumbled

For your phone

The Biscuit Baker (iPad; $1.99)

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
life@metronews.ca

Complement your dog's diet with some homemade treats. These 25 recipes offer up biscuits flavoured with beef stew, chicken pie and apple bacon. Check with your vet before you bake.

Baseball

Maddux, Glavine, Thomas heading to the Hall of Fame

Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine and Frank Thomas were elected to baseball's Hall of Fame on Wednesday, while Craig Biggio fell two votes short and tainted stars of the Steroids Era remained far behind.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A ballot for the people

"I always like a little anarchy inside the cathedral we've made of sports."

ESPN host Dan Le Batard, who acknowledged Wednesday he gave his baseball Hall of Fame ballot to the website Deadspin because he detests the "hypocrisy" in the voting process. Le Batard confirmed he let Deadspin readers decide who he would vote for. Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine were on Le Batard's ballot, as was Craig Biggio.

UCI

Independent panel looking into doping allegations

A three-man independent panel will investigate cycling's doping past, including allegations the sport's governing body colluded with Lance Armstrong.

UCI president Brian Cookson said Wednesday the commission will investigate allegations "that the UCI has been involved in wrongdoing in the past — allegations which have done so much to hurt the credibility of the UCI and our sport."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Jets' Zach Bogosian goes hard into the boards after trying to stop the Tampa Bay Lightning's Martin St. Louis as he scored an empty-net goal in Winnipeg, Tuesday. The 4-2 loss was Winnipeg's fourth straight without earning even a point. TREVOR HAGAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Winnipeg loses footing on climb to playoffs

NHL. Coach begins damage assessment after Tampa loss drops Jets out of contention

More often than not, coach Claude Noel seems to be the kind of guy who looks at his glass as half full.

But even he was forced to admit his Winnipeg Jets were on a path to nowhere, judging by the way they lost to the Tampa Bay Lightning this week.

Just the day before, he was talking after practice about signs the team was doing what it needed to start turning things around, after losing three straight on the road.

Then Martin St. Louis and Tampa Bay came to town and any system Noel might have thought his players were buying into seemed to evaporate. They struggled to even get a shot on goal without a power play to help and fell 4-2 to the Lightning.

"Playing like that, we're not taking steps in the right direction and that's the concern," a solemn Noel said after the loss.

"Obviously there's some things that have to be assessed here.... I will look at the team and look at the tape and try to figure out where we go from here."

Upcoming games

The Columbus Blue Jackets visit Winnipeg Saturday and conference rival Phoenix will be at the MTS Centre Monday.

Where they go right now is down.

With 43 points in 46 games, the Jets (19-22-5) now sit 12th in the Western Conference, ahead of only Calgary and Edmonton, and well out of striking distance for a playoff spot. They're four wins back of teams like the Phoenix Coyotes and Minnesota Wild, and both have games in hand.

It's the first time this season they've lost four straight in regulation without at least picking up a point for taking it to overtime.

Goalie Ondrej Pavelec contrasted the way the Jets played to the more controlled approach of the Lightning.

"They (have a) good system. They stick with the system. All four lines play the right way," he said.

Noel says he'll be taking a look at what he's doing as a coach as well as he seeks answers.

"My first look is going to be in the mirror ..." he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Jets quartet eyes podium landing

THE HOCKEY NEWS
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Team USA couldn't resist Blake Wheeler's combination of size and hands.
GETTY IMAGES FILE

Earlier this season, I speculated on which Jets would punch their tickets to Sochi and represent their nations. No need to guess any longer. The rosters have all been officially announced and because the Olympics are all we hockey folk can think about this week, let's look at which Jets will push for the podium.

Olli Jokinen, Finland: The big pivot was expected to make Finland all along, but his role on the team has grown unexpectedly. Saku Koivu withdrew his name and brother Mikko's ankle surgery makes him iffy to return in time for the games, so Jokinen automatically climbs the depth chart. The Jets can only hope the Games continue the 35-year-old's momentum instead of tiring him out, as Jokinen has finally gotten going with 14 points in his past 18 games.

Blake Wheeler, USA: Wheeler started slowly in 2013-14 but the Team USA brass couldn't resist his combination of size and hands. He really helped his cause with a sizzling December in which he scored 10 goals in 14 games.

Michael Frolik, Czech Republic: There were some bizarre casualties from the Czech roster — Petr Nedved over Radim Vrbata and Jiri Hudler? Really? — but Frolik wasn't one of them, likely because he plays a strong two-way game. He's been a sneaky-good addition to the Jets, posting his best points-per-game mark and playing his most minutes since he was a Florida Panther three years ago.

Ondrej Pavelec, Czech Republic: Pavelec owns a 3.06 goals-against average and a .901 save percentage. He's once again among the league leaders in rubber faced. Glass half full: he needs to play in some competitive games with a lot at stake to get his confidence up, especially with Al Montoya badly outplaying him. Glass half empty: no goalie in the league could've used a break more, and with Tomas Vokoun and Michal Neuvirth not on the Czech team, Pavelec is all but assured a huge workload in Sochi.

As recently as the summer, I would've pegged more than four Jets for the Olympics, at least Dustin Byfuglien and Zach Bogosian, and maybe Andrew Ladd and Evander Kane had they gotten hot in the first half. Tobias Enstrom likely would've made Sweden, too, had he not pulled his name out. But for a team struggling to establish itself as a playoff contender or pretender, an extended layoff could be a big help.

Alpine skiing

Canadian Cowboys saddle up for Sochi

Canadian skier Manuel Osborne-Paradis learned how it felt to compete on the sport's biggest stage during his Olympic debut in Turin eight years ago.

He learned about pressure and expectations at the 2010 Games in his hometown of Vancouver.

His next mission is to build on that experience at his next Olympic appearance in Sochi, where he plans to ride the momentum from the team's strong start to the season.

The veteran skier will anchor the men's alpine team at the Games along with Erik Guay of Mont-Tremblant, Que., and Calgary's Jan Hudec. The three "Canadian Cowboys" were officially nominated to the Sochi 2014 Olympic team Wednesday.

Some of their teammates still have a chance to join them in Sochi. The qualification window is open until Jan. 26 and the roster is expected to be finalized the next day.

Guay had the top Canadian result in Vancouver, finishing fifth in the downhill and the super-G. Osborne-Paradis was 17th in the downhill and didn't finish the super-G while Hudec didn't crack the top 20 in either discipline. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Boston	43	28	13	2	126	94	58
Tampa Bay	43	26	13	4	123	102	56
Montreal	45	25	15	5	115	106	55
Detroit	43	19	14	10	114	121	48
Toronto	44	21	18	5	122	132	47
Ottawa	44	19	18	7	126	141	45
Florida	43	16	21	6	102	136	38
Buffalo	42	12	26	4	74	118	28

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	45	32	12	1	147	107	65
Philadelphia	44	23	17	4	117	119	50
Washington	42	20	16	6	128	128	46
Carolina	43	18	16	9	105	124	45
N.Y. Rangers	44	21	20	3	108	119	45
New Jersey	44	17	18	9	103	113	43
Columbus	43	19	20	4	117	126	42
N.Y. Islanders	45	16	22	7	124	149	39

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	45	29	7	9	167	124	67
St. Louis	42	30	7	5	155	97	65
Colorado	42	26	12	4	123	108	56
Minnesota	45	23	17	5	108	114	51
Dallas	42	20	15	7	123	131	47
Nashville	44	19	19	6	105	131	44
Winnipeg	46	19	22	5	125	139	43

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Anaheim	45	32	8	5	151	113	69
San Jose	44	27	11	6	144	114	60
Los Angeles	44	26	13	5	114	91	57
Vancouver	45	23	13	9	121	113	55
Phoenix	42	21	12	9	129	127	51
Calgary	43	15	22	6	100	137	36
Edmonton	46	14	27	5	119	161	33

Note: Two points awarded for a win, one point for an overtime or shootout loss.

Wednesday's results
Philadelphia 3 Montreal 1
N.Y. Rangers at Chicago
Ottawa at Colorado
Tuesday's results
Anaheim 5 Boston 2
Minnesota 2 Los Angeles 1 (SO)
Nashville 3 San Jose 2
N.Y. Islanders 5 Toronto 3
Philadelphia 3 New Jersey 2 (OT)
Phoenix 6 Calgary 0
Pittsburgh 5 Vancouver 4 (SO)
St. Louis 5 Edmonton 2
Tampa Bay 4 Winnipeg 2
Carolina at Buffalo (ppd., storm)
Thursday's games — All Times Eastern
Dallas at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Toronto at Carolina, 7 p.m.
Florida at Buffalo, 7 p.m.
Washington at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Anaheim at Nashville, 8 p.m.
St. Louis at Calgary, 9 p.m.
Minnesota at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
Boston at Los Angeles, 10:30 p.m.
Detroit at San Jose, 10:30 p.m.
Friday's games
Dallas at N.Y. Rangers, 7 p.m.
Toronto at Washington, 7 p.m.
Carolina at Columbus, 7 p.m.
N.Y. Islanders at Colorado, 9 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Edmonton, 10 p.m.
St. Louis at Vancouver, 10 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	Pt
Crosby, Pgh	24	41	65
Kane, Chi	23	31	54
Tavares, NYI	20	34	54
Getzlaf, Ana	20	29	49
Kunitz, Pgh	23	25	48
Thornton, SJ	5	43	48
Sharp, Chi	25	21	46
Perry, Ana	24	22	46
Backstrom, Wash	10	36	46
Malkin, Pgh	12	33	45
Toews, Chi	15	29	44
Ovechkin, Wash	31	12	43
Okposo, NYI	17	26	43
Marleau, SJ	20	22	42
Keith, Chi	3	39	42
Seguin, Dal	21	20	41

Not including last night's games

NFL PLAYOFFS

DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS

Saturday's games — All Times Eastern
NFC — New Orleans at Seattle, 4:35 p.m.
AFC — Indianapolis at New England, 8:15 p.m.
Sunday's games
NFC — San Francisco at Carolina, 1:05 p.m.
AFC — San Diego at Denver, 4:40 p.m.

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Indiana	28	7	.800	Ñ
d-Miami	27	8	.771	1
Atlanta	19	17	.528	9½
d-Toronto	17	17	.500	10½
Washington	15	17	.469	11½
Chicago	15	18	.455	12
Charlotte	15	21	.417	13½
Brooklyn	14	21	.400	14
Detroit	14	22	.389	14½
Boston	13	22	.371	15
New York	12	22	.353	15½
Cleveland	12	23	.343	16
Philadelphia	12	23	.343	16
Orlando	10	24	.294	17½
Milwaukee	7	27	.206	20½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-San Antonio	28	8	.778	Ñ
d-Oklahoma City	27	8	.771	½
Portland	26	9	.743	1½
d-L.A. Clippers	24	13	.649	4½
Golden State	24	14	.632	5
Houston	22	13	.629	5½
Phoenix	20	13	.606	6½
Dallas	20	16	.556	8
Denver	17	17	.500	10
Minnesota	17	17	.500	10
New Orleans	15	18	.455	11½
Memphis	15	19	.441	12
L.A. Lakers	14	21	.400	13½
Sacramento	11	22	.333	15½
Utah	12	25	.324	16½

d — division leaders ranked in top four positions.

Wednesday's results
Toronto 112 Detroit 91
Atlanta 97 Indiana 87
Brooklyn 102 Golden State 98
San Antonio 112 Dallas 90
Washington at New Orleans
L.A. Lakers at Houston
Phoenix at Minnesota
Orlando at Portland
Boston at L.A. Clippers
Tuesday's late results
Denver 129 Boston 98
Sacramento 123 Portland 119
San Antonio 110 Memphis 108 (OT)
Utah 112 Oklahoma City 101
Thursday's games — All Times Eastern
Miami at New York, 8 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Denver, 10:30 p.m.

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You will gain more by doing less today. Cut back on your workload or get friends to help you out. Better still, do both. There's no cosmic law that says you have to do anything at all.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You will be inspired to give your best over the next 24 hours. Hold on to that positive, can-do attitude as long as you can — ideally until the moon is full seven days from now.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Today you will know what is right and wrong, and which course of action you should be taking. If you choose not to take it, the consequences may not be to your liking.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
If someone whose judgment you trust urges you to really go for it today, you must act immediately. Too often in the past you have been too careful and missed out — now go to the other extreme and throw caution to the wind.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
It's a good day romance and if anyone is of the opinion that you lack passion, they will soon see the error of their ways. When a Leo gets fired up, the heat is enough to melt the coldest of hearts.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You are enamored more by things than you are by people at the moment. There's nothing wrong with that but take care that your material desires don't detract from your relationships.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
If you think all things are possible, you're right. But why make a battle of it when you have the charm to get what you want without a struggle? Or is that what you enjoy?

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Let others know what you are willing to put up with and what will happen if they push their luck too far. There are times to be tactful but this isn't one of them. Be bold and, if necessary, be brutal too.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Don't stay indoors and hide away. Get out into the world and show everyone what star quality looks like. You were born to be larger than life, so why are you peeking out from behind the curtains?

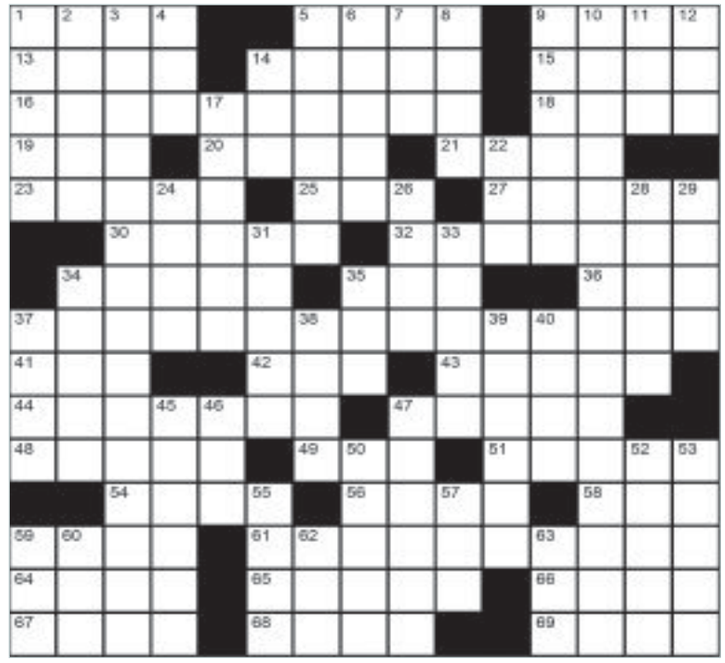
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
If you've fallen out with someone, it is the time to make up. That applies to all kinds of relationships but mainly to those of a personal nature.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You may think you can do as you please at the moment but you are kidding yourself and today's events will bring that fact home to you sharply. There are forces operating behind the scenes that limit your options.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
If someone wants to make a nuisance of themselves, let them. Most likely, they are hoping you will overreact. Treat them with the contempt they deserve — ignore them completely. **SALLY BROMPTON**

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

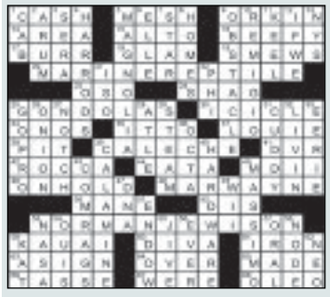
See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. ...seis, siete, __...
5. Margaret Mitchell's epic book of '36
9. Rabbit-style tail
13. Scorch
14. Medieval thigh armour, variantly
15. #5-Across home
16. It's currently underway in Russia: 2 wds.
18. AD = __ Domini
19. Oxygen
20. Robert Burns' 'old'
21. Money obligation
23. Mythological tree nymph
25. Type of rally
27. Get cut, do this
30. American poet Sylvia
32. Port __, BC
34. Russian river
35. Orlando's li'l state
36. Implore
37. Cultural attractions in Ottawa: 2 wds.
41. Meal scrap
42. '90s album: 'A Boy Named __'
43. Grocery section
44. Canadian actress Wendy
47. Outrageous interest rate
48. North or South country
49. Practically forever
51. Canadian measurement
54. Soaks flax
56. Bon Jovi's Mr. Torres
58. "Take on Me" band
59. Vancouver-born broadcaster, __-Yin Lee
61. Billboard toppers: 2 wds.
64. Pottery-firing furnace
65. Classic theatre
66. Give out
67. __ _'Orleans, Quebec
68. Get a paycheck
69. Ptolemy's pursuit, puny-ly

Down
1. Group of eight
2. Church singing group
3. It put Daniel Radcliffe on the map: 3 wds.
4. Legendary monster
5. 'G' of Ontario's U of G
6. Actress Olivia
7. Airport screening org.
8. Colin James' "__ You Lie"
9. Horsie's house
10. Chaucer's creation: 2 wds.
11. Vase
12. Philosophical principle
14. French vineyard
17. Attempted: 3 wds.
22. Shrink
24. U2's "__ _ Want Is You"
26. Warm climate tree
28. "__ of the State" (1998)
29. Makes ground holes
31. Sylvester Stallone/Kurt Russell movie, "__ & Cash" (1989)
33. Hails
34. Writer of ancient Rome, Marcus Terentius __
35. "And __, she don't know...": Bit of The Supremes' "Back in My Arms Again"
37. Arrow-to-bow-string groove
38. Five-star
39. Pink-fleshed fish, en francais
40. Emerald land
45. 'Kiss Land': Album by Canadian artist The __
46. Took a chair
47. Early Celine Dion song
50. CC-138 Twin __ (Search and Rescue aircraft of the RCAF)
52. #5-Across' leading man
53. Facilitator
55. Cobbler's fixed thing
57. NFL's Bengals, on scoreboards
59. Do alpine-ing
60. Pantry product
62. Ms. Lupino
63. "Today" rival, commonly

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

2		6	8		3	4		9
		9	2		5	7		
	7						6	
			5		7			
5								8
			3		2			
	9						3	
		3	6		4	8		
8		7	1		9	5		6

Yesterday's Sudoku

2	3	9	1	7	6	5	4	8
1	7	4	5	3	8	6	9	2
5	8	6	4	9	2	1	3	7
8	9	7	6	2	4	3	5	1
4	6	2	3	5	1	8	7	9
3	1	5	9	8	7	2	6	4
7	2	3	8	4	5	9	1	6
6	5	8	7	1	9	4	2	3
9	4	1	2	6	3	7	8	5

Weather

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MAX: -10° MIN: -11°	MAX: -3° MIN: -9°	MAX: -5° MIN: -13°

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